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Title of the Paper: The ‘Gutted’ Author: A Reflection on Chuck Palahniuk’s Horror Short Story “Guts”

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Abstract

“Guts” is a short story included in Chuck Palahniuk’s dark anthology entitled *Haunted* (2005). Clearly inspired by Mary Shelley’s introductory remarks to *Frankenstein: or the Modern Prometheus* (1831), *Haunted* focuses on a group of unusual aspiring writers who get on a bus that will eventually take them to a mysterious writer’s retreat: an old abandoned theatre.

“Guts” one of the many hauntings that forms part of the creepy body of Palahniuk’s anthology was selected as object of analysis both due to its self-reflexive nature and clever literary construction. Despite being a short story that dwells upon awful events simultaneously imprinting the most grotesque images on the reader’s imagination, its dystopian narrative unfolds as a metaphor for the act of writing itself and this is precisely what contributes to render it one of the most original accounts.

Apart from examining the way whereby this metaphor is put together by the artful imagination of Chuck Palahniuk, this paper will also explore the ways in which the Gothic becomes the most effective literary genre when it comes to portraying the tortuous process implicit in the literary creative process, by resorting to classic powerful tropes such as the abject, the grotesque, the uncanny and the double.

In this short story, Palahniuk interweaves pain with art showing that whoever wishes to become a writer must indeed have “the guts” to do it.

Key-words: Gothic, horror, guts, metaphor, writing, abject, grotesque, uncanny, double.